

New 'Flower Building' Facade Unveiled on W. Broad Project

By Nicholas F. Benton

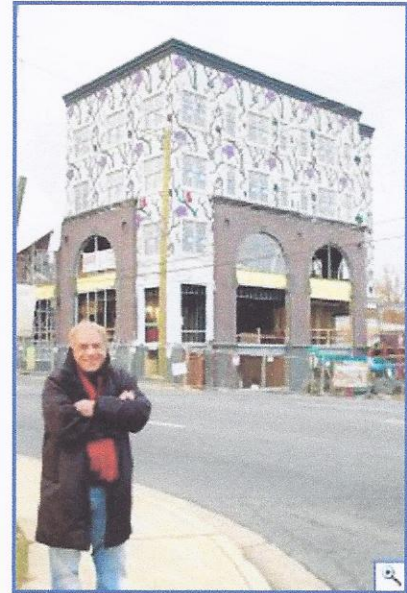
Thursday, December 11 2008 12:27:18 PM

Art Nouveau Design Puts F.C. on Map

Many residents of the City of Falls Church have a habit of exalting their community for its "special" traits, including its quality of life and excellent school system.

Now, they can boast of another genuinely unique feature of their home town: not one but two highly novel and unique Art Nouveau multi-story buildings along its main Broad Street corridor.

Developer Bob Young of the Young Group unveiled the first stylized Vienna school Art Nouveau component of his new building going up at 800 West Broad St. this week, and the stunning look has drawn a wide range of reactions. It has already earned the structure the nickname, "The Flower Building," coined by Councilman Dan Sze at Monday's City Council meeting.



youngflowersfront841.jpg

The building complements Young's recently-completed Read Building at 402 West Broad St., designed with rounded arcs, round windows and iron features in the 19th century Art Nouveau Glasgow school tradition.

The two buildings, located within blocks of each other on the same north side of West Broad (Rt. 7), make Falls Church a destination for all students and fans of Art Nouveau, and generally innovative, architecture. The buildings are the only two of their kind in the Greater Washington, D.C. region, if not nationally, especially as newly-built structures.

The design on the new 800 W. Broad building, which will house the re-located U.S. Post Office and School Board offices, was met with high praise from members of the F.C. City Council Monday. Sze called it "impressive" and "pretty," adding, "I am very proud of it." Mayor Robin Gardner and Councilman Hal Lippman said they agreed.

Others, however, have not been so impressed. Comments on the popular Falls Church blog site, Blueweeds, have called it "crazy," "absurd" and "ugly."

On the other hand, other comments were more favorable. One wrote, "We always talk about being eclectic and bringing in more public art, and here it is. It is definitely a sight to behold. Much better than cookie-cutter buildings that everyone complains about because it is boring and too traditional. This is a nice addition to the City."

Another commented, "Holy cow...I think it is a brilliant piece of public art."

When told that one citizen called it "whimsical," Young said, "That's exactly right."

Some have complained about the City Hall approval process that permitted the design, but others noted the building was constructed "by right," without the need of any special City permission, although its design had been presented to the Planning Commission and Architectural Advisory Board, neither of which objected. One blog commentator said, "I like it. I don't like governments completely legislating aesthetics."

Young, in comments to the *News-Press*, noted that the component just unveiled, despite its visually-looming impact, covers only 20 percent of the building, and that a great deal more Art Nouveau features, especially vine-like and flower designs using iron, will be integrated into the rest of the building, which is due to be completed by March 2009.

Young first broke architectural, cultural and economic tradition in Falls Church with his first Art Nouveau building project, the Read Building, now home to a branch of the PNC Bank and Vantage Fitness, along with 40 residential units.

In addition to its unique design, the building bears the name of a Civil War era hero, John Read, who worked in and around Falls Church to educate freed slaves. He was martyred by Confederate forces for his efforts, and is buried in Falls Church.

Young chose to honor the memory of Read in consultation with some City historians after rejecting the recommendation of others to name the building for an original land-grant family based on Falls Church soil, because that family owned slaves.

The Read Building also constituted the first, official "workforce housing" project in Falls Church, as Young and the Falls Church Housing Corporation worked with the Falls Church City Public Schools to design residential units to the specs optimal for public school teachers. The units, at reduced cost, are now filled with many employees of the local school system, who ordinarily could not afford the high rents in the City.

Despite being based in McLean for years, Young has become a major benefactor of affordable housing and educational causes in Falls Church, including as a founding

board member and chair of the non-profit Falls Church Education Foundation. His son was, for a time, a teacher in the Falls Church school system.

Concerning the 800 W. Broad building, architect Jack Wilburn, who designed the all - retail and commercial "flower building" and will locate his firm's offices there, commented, "Following a mutual admiration for Fin de Siecle/Art Nouveau crafts, art and architecture, the decision was made to look to Austria turn-of-the-century architecture for inspiration much as Young's previous building at 402 W. Broad looked to the Glasgow school. These turn-of-the-previous-century works have much the same eclectic blend of solid tradition and forward looking that seems appropriate to this city at the turn of this century."

Among other things, the building is Gold LEED standard, according to an energy efficiency and environmental rating system.

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Last Updated on Monday, December 1 2008 12:16:46 AM

Secret to His Success: How Bob Young Fills His Retail Spaces



By Nicholas F. Benton

Wednesday, August 18 2010 05:35:52 PM

With only a couple of minor permits awaiting issuance by City Hall, the Sfizi Italian trattoria cafe, wine shop and deli market will relocate from Fairfax to the famous 800 W. Broad building in the City of Falls Church, marking the filling of that new all-commercial building to capacity. It will go into the lower level, below the U.S. Post Office.

There is a wide discrepancy between that building, as well as the new Read Building at 402 W. Broad and the Washington Market Center on S. Washington, home of Elevation Burger, and other new mixed use projects in Falls Church whose commercial and retail spaces remain mostly vacant.

The laggards include the Broadway, the Byron, the Spectrum and Pearson Square, the City's four biggest new mixed use projects all built in the last decade.

What explains why one set of properties is enjoying the benefits of "Sold Out!" signs on all its retail spaces, including those housing seven winners of the *News-Press*' recent "Best of Falls Church" honors, and others sitting gloomily mostly empty?

Only two words can account for it: Bob Young.

Mr. Young, principal of his Young Group and Jefferson One development entities, is of southern Italian heritage, a native of La Jolla, California, a graduate of the prestigious Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and a former analyst for the Defense Advanced Research Properties Agency (DARPA) who moved to McLean a couple decades ago to launch his own business. For more than a decade now, he has concentrated his development and considerable philanthropic efforts on Falls Church.



Bob Young.

A renaissance man with a penchant for artifacts from the European Art Nouveau era, Robert Young (or Giovanni, before his father Anglicanized the family name) has distinguished Falls Church by designing his two new buildings on W. Broad in Falls Church in the Glasgow and Vienna Schools of architectural Art Nouveau tradition, *ergo* the latest one now informally known as the "Flower Building."

In the case of his first building, known as the Read Building at 402 W. Broad, he contributed elements of its residential component to the City's first-ever "workforce housing" for local school employees, and broke from an unfortunate City tradition of naming new projects for slave-owning original land grant title holders who occupied land in the City limits (such as Pearson and Trammel) and instead named it for John Read, an anti-slavery Union soldier killed on Falls Church soil during the Civil War.

But most importantly, Mr. Young has taken a very hand-on, pro-active approach to filling his commercial and retail spaces, and the results are very evident.

It comes right down to the fact that "you have to be willing to make a deal," he told the *News-Press* in an interview last week. It is something that a local developer, who is on the scene, rather than an impersonal owner such as an out-of-the-area bank or investment company, can do.

To such entities, like the bank that now owns the Spectrum, property values remain propped up on paper by refusing to budge from the advertised leasing rates. Property managers are hamstrung by their inability to negotiate to make a deal work for a prospective tenant.

"You have to be willing to sacrifice something now for the long-term gain of having a vibrant, active building," Young said, and the risks and sacrifices can be more than nominal, but considerable.

"You work hard at it. Once you've committed to a building, there is only one acceptable outcome, which is to fill it," he said. "You do what you have to do to craft a deal, taking a long-term view. It can't be hit-and-run, but it must be set up so that it's a long-term proposition."

His latest deal involves the sale of his property at 70 W. Broad to a hotel development group in Tysons Corner that intends to build a Hilton Garden Inn there, with Young remaining involved in the project as the builder of a small office building facing onto Park Avenue as part of the plan.

"I've now got a lot of eggs in this basket (of Falls Church)," he said, and with the failure of the affordable housing project that would have included his construction of an all-commercial office building, the Mceever, on S. Washington, he now holds letters of intent from prospective new tenants in that building amounting to about 50,000 square feet of occupancies.

He noted the recent passing of his friend Leonard Shapiro, long-time owner of two major commercial properties on West Broad, where Anthony's and Crisp and Juicy now stand, which he considers ripe for redevelopment.

With land values now down about 20 percent, he said, "this is a great time to start something new." He said it is important to recognize the unique features of Falls Church, especially that it is composed of many small commercial properties owned by a lot of different people.

Apart from the now moribund Atlantic Realty plan for a City Center development that involved a lot of City-owned land, "It is unrealistic to wait to assemble all the private commercial properties that would be required for a major development," he said. "But a lot of right-sized development can occur in the City."

He said the goal should be to develop 25,000 to 75,000 square foot buildings, not 200,000 square foot ones, and only in one or two places could something as big as 100,000 square feet fit in.

But too much development over the past decade in Falls Church has been done only for fees, he said, with the properties being transferred into hands-off absentee owners.

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LongTimeResident

Mr. Young has taken a lot of crap from nearby residents of the future hotel, but there should be no doubt who is actually making a difference in Falls Church City in terms of viable primarily commercial redevelopment.

[1 year ago](#)

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[fcindependent](#), Michael Irvine

Interesting. I'd be interested in seeing a side-by-side comparison of commercial and residential vacancy rates at recent developments owned by Bob Young and those not. If the discrepancy is really as significant as Nick Benton suggests, Mr. Young should certainly be commended for his investment in our city.

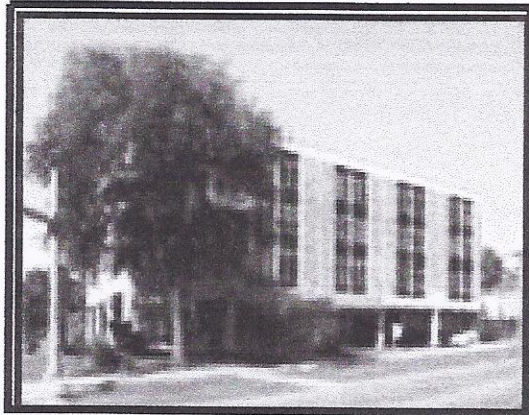


AVAILABLE COMMERCIAL SPACE IN FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA

Updated as of August 25, 2011

Sources: CoStar commercial database, MRIS, LOOPNet, updates from brokers and/or owners. Listed in alphabetical order (ignoring N/S/E/W designations).

CITY OF FALLS CHURCH



701 W BROAD STREET

Handmacher Building

Land size: 13,332 SF Zoned: B1

911 SF OFFICE – 4th floor, \$18.50, \$1,404.46

Minimum 1 year lease term. All full service.

Leasing contact: Treena Rinaldi (703) 532-7704,
treenarinaldi@aol.com

*For a copy of the floor plan, please contact the City of Falls
Church Economic Development Office at (703) 248-5491 or
bwitsman@fallschurchva.gov*

800 W BROAD STREET

"The Flower Building"

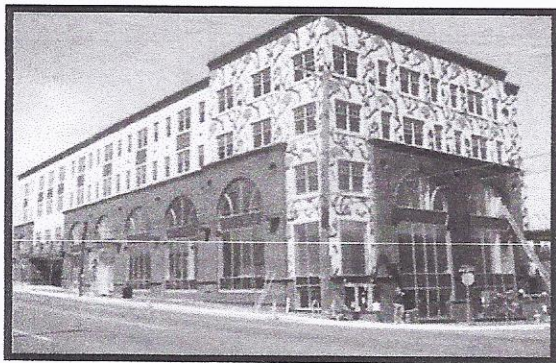
Land size: 10,000 SF, Zoned: B1

Office and retail building; LEED's Gold certified. Post Office
is anchor tenant. Sfizi Café is expected to be completed soon.

860 SF OFFICE space available.

Lease: \$32.79 NNN, \$2,350 per month
3 year lease term

Walt Mullen, KW Commercial, 703-330-2222 X 325,
wrmcommercial@gmail.com



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Falls Church Post Office Moving

Move Date Set for June 20**June 08, 2009****Release No. 09-015**

Merrifield VA — On June 20, 2009, the Falls Church Post Office retail operation and post office box services will be relocating from 301 Broad Street to 800 West Broad Street.

The move is necessary to make way for the new Falls Church City Center currently under construction. The new City Center will be built on the city-owned public parking lot currently used by Broad Street Postal Customers. All post office box customers have been notified of the move and will receive mail boxes at the new retail unit. The facility at 301 Broad Street will continue to house carrier delivery operations.

Commercial mailings will continue to be accepted at the Bulk Mail Entry Unit (BMEU) located at 301 Broad Street.

"The new Post Office facility will improve the customers' experience," said Postmaster Donna Bradley. The new lobby will house 1500 post office boxes and an Automated Postal Center giving customers 24-hour access to most Postal services. Customers will pick up "left notice" accountable mail, parcels and hold mail from the new 800 Broad Street location. Regular lobby hours will remain 09:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday through Friday and 09:00 AM–12:00 PM Saturdays. The lobby is accessible directly from the parking garage on Oak street or the main entrance on West Broad Street.

Customers are asked to contact the Falls Church Post Office at (703) 532-8823 for more information.

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Please Note: For broadcast quality video and audio, photo stills and other media resources, visit the USPS Newsroom at www.usps.com/communications/newsroom/welcome.htm.

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 149 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes, six days a week. It has 34,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. Named the Most Trusted Government Agency five consecutive years by the Ponemon Institute, the Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.

POSTAL NEWS

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POSTAL NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sept. 2, 2009

Contact: Greg Frey
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Release No. 09-074

Fewer Retail Offices Remain Under Review for Consolidation *USPS Moves to Remove Cost and Maintain Customer Access*

WASHINGTON — The Postal Service announced today that 413 retail stations and branches remain under consideration for possible consolidation. Today's announcement updates a study begun earlier this summer that examined a wide range of stations and branches in urban and suburban areas across the country, focusing on offices in close proximity to determine where consolidations might be feasible, while maintaining customer access to postal services.

With nearly 37,000 Post Offices, stations, branches, contract and community post offices, the U.S. Postal Service has the largest retail network in the United States. In addition, about 56,000 other locations such as supermarkets, drug stores, and other retailers sell postage and selected postal services. Nearly 18,000 automated teller machines (ATMs) also dispense sheets of stamps. And, postage can be purchased and printed on personal computers at usps.com.

The only provider of mail service to every home and business address in the country, the Postal Service is committed to providing reliable, secure, affordable postal services with convenient access. Unlike most federal agencies, America's national mail system receives no tax subsidy for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

The current deep national recession has exacerbated erosion in First-Class Mail volumes due to a change in consumer preferences to electronic systems for instant messaging, invoicing and bill payment. Mail volume in 2009 is projected to be as much as 20 billion fewer pieces than in 2008. Still, mail volume in 2009 will be in the neighborhood of 170 billion pieces of mail.

To offset the current extremely difficult financial position, the Postal Service has successfully removed more than \$6 billion in cost in 2009, including:

- Cutting more than 100 million work hours, the equivalent of 57,000 positions;
- Closing six district administrative offices;
- Adjusting carrier routes to reflect diminished volume and eliminating nearly 12,000 carrier routes;
- Instituting a nationwide hiring freeze;
- Reducing authorized staffing levels at national and regional offices by 15 percent;
- Selling unused and under-utilized postal facilities;
- Adjusting Post Office hours to better reflect customer use;
- Consolidating mail processing operations;
- Halting construction of new postal facilities; and
- Freezing salaries of all Postal Service officers and executives.

Additional efficiency initiatives are continuing. Reducing over-capacity in retail and delivery operations is a good business move. Every effort will be made to maintain and improve customer access to postal services.

Today's announcement is part of the Station and Branch Optimization and Consolidation initiative that is currently being reviewed by the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC). As part of this proceeding, the Postal Service is required to file with the PRC the names of facilities under review.

The filing does not represent a final decision on consolidation. No final actions will be taken regarding consolidation as a result of this initiative until after Oct. 2, 2009.

[Click here for the list of stations and branches currently being reviewed.](#)

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